

Foreword

This issue of the *Oklahoma Native Plant Record* contains two dendrochronology reports, a phenological study of Oklahoma Asteraceae, and a study of the effect of cold stratification on germination of seeds of a native plant. These studies provide evidence of how land-use changes and abiotic factors affect Oklahoma plant communities and native species as well as provide insight into how future changes could impact our native flora.

Chad King from the University of Central Oklahoma investigated the growth patterns and ages of trees at Martin Park Nature Center in north Oklahoma City. He reports that some trees in this park are approaching a century in age. Through the analysis of tree-rings, he was able to determine when trees of various species became established, and document variation in annual growth over time, indicating periods of growth suppression and growth release that might be due to land-use practices after the park was established in 1963.

John Unterschuetz and Abigail Moore from the University of Oklahoma, and Jennifer Messick from the University of Central Oklahoma investigated the flowering phases of herbarium specimens of four native Asteraceae (sunflower family) species that had been collected since the early 1900s. Their goal was to determine if there was evidence of shifts in flowering times related to changing climatic conditions.

Carmen Esqueda and Chad King of the University of Central Oklahoma provide a literature review of dendrochronological research conducted solely within the state of Oklahoma, beginning almost 100 years ago. Common research topics included age-diameter/growth rate, stand dynamics, climate, fire history, and some combinations of these topics. Post oak, blackjack oak, and eastern redcedar were the most frequently studied species. The authors identify understudied species and research topics that might stimulate additional dendrochronological research in the state.

Samantha Coplen from the University of Central Oklahoma investigated the effect of cold stratification on germination of seeds of the pitcher sage, *Salvia azurea* var. *grandiflora*. Studies such as this, by documenting the germination probability of seeds exposed to different lengths of cold stratification, can give insight into whether climate change could reduce germination probability in the future.

This issue's Critic's Choice essay was written by Paul Buck for the Fall 1998 *Gaillardia*. It describes his attempts to verbalize what I suspect we all experience when we take time to reflect on the immense beauty of Oklahoma landscapes. He encourages us to extend our observations past dusk to experience the transition in sights, sounds, and scents from daylight to dark.

Please consider publishing your work in the *Oklahoma Native Plant Record*. It is listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals, is abstracted by the Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International, and can be accessed by researchers around the world.

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Managing Editor